



## For Immediate Release

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### **Dragoon Diversity**

**Zabul, Afghanistan**—During a recent visit to Forward Operating Base Lagman Lieutenant General David Rodriguez, Commander of International Security Assistance Force Joint Command and Deputy Commander of the United States Forces Afghanistan, honored two women from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Stryker Cavalry Regiment for very different reasons. One was honored for her outstanding job performance and the other was congratulated in achieving a much more personal victory.

Staff Sgt. Karla Gonzalez was awarded the General's personal coin for recently becoming a United States citizen after nearly six years in the service. Currently there are more than 65,000 foreign born individuals serving in the United States Armed Forces. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Stryker Cavalry Regiment currently has 147 noncitizens within its ranks. This includes naturalized citizens as well as noncitizens. According to recent statistics, 9.5 percent of these Soldiers were born in Mexico.

Gonzalez was born in Mexicali-Baja Mexico. Her family moved to Santa Ana California during her formative years. At the age of 10, Karla was no fan of her new homeland.

"I hated it in the states at first because of the language barrier," she said. "I didn't know the language so I just wanted to go back to Mexico." Gradually, however, she grew to love her new

surroundings. By the eighth grade she had learned English and began making new friends. It was in high school that she began to cultivate her desire to join the service.

After receiving her residency card, Gonzalez began talking to recruiters from both the Air Force and the Army but in the end it was the caring nature of the Army recruiters that won her over.

“They were always there for me,” she said. “They helped make sure my kids and I were always taken care of.”

In an effort to pass on that caring to others, Gonzalez became a Human Resource Specialist and said it is the perfect job for her.

Gonzalez is now is in the middle of her second deployment with 2SCR and is serving as the adjutant to the Regimental Commander.

Also recognized during Rodriguez’s visit was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Christine Chang was awarded an Impact Army Commendation Medal for her outstanding performance as the Regimental Comptroller. Chang is not only a highly professional officer but also a talented performer. Her vocal prowess was demonstrated Thursday, August 26 as a special solo vocalist at the Women’s Equality Luncheon held by 2SCR at FOB Lagman in commemoration of the signing of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment which gave women the right to vote.

There are more than 74,000 women in the United States Army. This is merely a fraction of the 208,829 female service members serving in all the Armed Forces. It is people like Chang and Gonzalez that truly epitomize the cultural diversity that not only makes up the 2<sup>nd</sup> Stryker Cavalry Regiment but the very fabric of what we call the United States of America.



**Congratulations:** Lieutenant General David Rodriguez (right) stops for a photo with Staff Sgt. Karla Rodriguez.



**SONG Bird:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Christine Chang sings for the attendees of the Women's Equality Day Luncheon (Photo by, Spc. Audrey Glynn)